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July 20, 2010

Mr. Ted Matley
Federal Transit Administration
Region IX
U.S. Department of Transportation
201 Mission Street Suite 1650
San Francisco, CA 94105

RE: Final EIS Comments and concerns on
Oahu's High Capacity Rail Transit.

Dear Mr. Matley:

Enclosed is my letter to Oahu's City & County of
Honolulu's, Dept. of Transportation Services' Director
Wayne Yoshioka's and the City administration.

I am not against mass transit, since I ride
our city's Mass Transit system on almost a daily basis,
but I have also ridden other means of transportation,
on steel rail system such as commuter trains, bullet
train, the metro in other cities and countries. What
works there does not always mean it will work on
Oahu, a relatively small island mass, with established
developments.

Oahu commuters are not all familiar with transferring to other ~~several~~ ^{several} ~~means~~ ^{means} of transportation to get to their final destinations, as other much larger ~~cities~~ ^{cities} like New York or Chicago, since the commute time is much less than these larger cities and ~~park & ride facilities are non existing~~ ^{park & ride facilities are non existing} currently.

Thanking you for the opportunity to speak as to why Oahu should not have a 20 or 28 mile elevated transit system.

DAISY MURAI

3089 Kaimanani St

Honolulu, HI 96815

Mr. Wayne Yoshioka
Dept. of Transportation Services Director
City & County of Honolulu
650 South King Street, 3rd Floor
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Comments and Concerns on Oahu's High Capacity Mass Transit Corridor Project Final EIS
by Daisy Murai, a Kapahulu resident & a frequent City's Mass Transit TheBus Commuter

Director Yoshioka:

Thank you, Mayor Hannemann and the City & County of Honolulu in finally releasing the much anticipated FINAL EIS on the RAIL TRANSIT Project for the Island of Oahu to the General Public for Comments and Concerns. The project for an elevated fixed guideway from East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center to serve as a traffic congestion reliever by the year 2030 is a most ambitious Public project under taken by the City & County of Honolulu to service residents to and from West Oahu – especially during the morning and afternoon Rush Hours.

The EIS mentions, since one traffic lane is not wide enough to accommodate the support columns of the elevated Rail Tracks, the neighboring traffic lanes will need to be narrowed to 10 feet wide. This criteria applies only to areas that have existing buildings, not to the open land areas in East Kapolei and other properties the City will acquire.

The EIS has a simulation of various passengers boarding the Rail Trams in a matter of 30 seconds with no difficulty – even a wheelchair individual, but the 6-8 passengers shown boarding, is typical during NON-RUSH HOURS. The true test is during RUSH HOUR when 20 or more passengers, including bicycle riders, other handicapped individuals, parents with children & baby strollers and when more than 1 wheelchair bound passenger boards the same tram in the 30 seconds or so allotted to board while other passengers disembark at the same time for each tram. I rode the Bullet Train in Japan and the Metro in Washington D.C. after the Morning Rush Hour, but it was still very busy and crowded. I did not see any passenger in a wheelchair, walker or have difficulty walking, board the Railroad Trams, since the boarding and un-boarding times are very short.

I have a question on the fare structure by passengers riding the City's elevated Mass Transit RAIL System. Will the passengers need to pay each time they park their vehicles in the Park & Ride, then the Tram and finally the bus circulators to reach their destinations or will there be a single charge? Will the single charge be fair to passengers finding their own way to the Transit station or center, ride the tram and get off at another station, but will not need to ride bus circulators to reach their final destination

I understand the State Department of Transportation (DOT) also has several plans to ease traffic congestion for commuters traveling from the West side of Oahu to Downtown in the works. Some of these projects have already started and in operation – such as the East bound contra-flow lane on North Nimitz Highway during the morning Rush Hour, no entry into H1 Freeway from the Vineyard off ramp traveling Westbound during the Weekday mornings as well as the Free Traveling Roadside Tow Truck Service assisting stranded motorists on the H1 & H2 Freeway with expansion to other parts of Oahu in the near future as reported by State DOT Director Brenden Morioka. I feel that these 3 projects have really made a difference in commuter travel time during the morning Rush Hours. The drive time commute to Downtown without UH of Hawaii at Manoa students and staff is about 45 – 50 minutes between 6 – 7 am on the Weekdays, as shown on the Drive Time segment on Hawaii News Now (KHNL & KGMB TVs). The Drive time when UH Manoa is in session, is only about 10 – 20 minutes longer or 55 – 70 minutes in heavy traffic. This is just 3 – 28 minutes longer than if one is to travel by the City's elevated Rail System to Ala Moana Center as mentioned in the EIS. This is the 42 minutes RAIL TRAVEL TIME ONLY and does not account the time needed to Park your vehicle in the Park & Ride Facilities, go up (30 to 80 feet -at Ala Moana Center) to the Boarding Platform to catch the Trams to your station, go down to the ground floor to catch bus circulators to your final destination. I feel this will take much longer than riding the Current City's TheBus, City & Country Express Bus services by the City, other private Express Bus services, being dropped off or even by driving your own private vehicle(s) to reach Downtown Honolulu from the West side.

The State DOT has also announced plans to 2 traffic projects as reported in the July 14, 2010 Pacific Business News with the Salt Lake Contra-flow project to start later and be completed by 2012 as well as the much larger project of 2 additional lanes on the Middle Street merge entering into the H1 Freeway heading Diamond Head at a much later date.

The City has announced plans to start building the Alapai and King Streets Traffic Management Center as reported in the July 14, 2010 issue of the Honolulu Star-Advertiser Newspaper which should help commuters on the road get to their destinations much faster than presently from the East as well as the West sides.

I commute to my destinations almost daily on the City's Mass Transit System Network or better known as TheBus, if I am not car pooling with friends. I notice that during Rush Hours both in the morning & afternoon, the buses do have standing room only on their routes, but not all buses in circulation are packed to capacity. If the first bus is crowded, I know there will be other buses following and heading towards Kahala Mall, University of Hawaii, Waikiki, Salt Lake, Ala Moana Center, Liliha, Kailua, Kaneohe, and other destinations. I just wait a few more minutes for the following bus or two at the bus stop, thus avoiding standing and being crushed like sardines in the very first bus on that route. I also notice the number of passengers significantly decrease after or before Rush Hour. The City's Mass Transit System is one of the Best world-wide, as I have heard passengers from other States and Country mention how fortunate Oahu is to have 365 days of bus service – even on Sundays and Major Holidays.

These are the reasons I feel the City's High Capacity Mass Transit is not the ideal solution to Oahu's traffic Congestion till 2030 as expressed in the Final EIS. In 2030, there will be thousands of the Baby Boomers retired and not needing an elevated Rail Transit. The Transit Oriented Developments at the Rail Stations and Centers as well as the power stations along the route, may enhance or destroy the Communities it passes through, especially if existing buildings and establishments are displaced for the Rail Alignment. The State will have several traffic congestion projects in place, as well as the City's Traffic Management Center will be in full operation to detangle traffic gridlock.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

Respectfully submitted
Daisy Murai
3039 Kaunaoa Street
Honolulu, HI 96815
July 20, 2010

cc: Mr. Ted Matley
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U.S. Department of Transportation
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